Autumn 2010 Vol. 5, No. 1

SOURCES

a publication of multi-faith chaplaincy

Rooted in Our Own Identity: Spiritual Sustainability

The biggest threat to Jewish and spiritual survival is a confused identity. Today, sadly, in many communities, discussions around spirituality and religion often have a pessimistic and

negative presentation which is turning off more young people than anything else. When we obsess about anti-Semitism, we paint ourselves as perpetual victims. When we over-emphasize the threat of assimilation it makes us feel like an endangered species. We Jews seem to be right there alongside the hump-back

whale and the giant panda in the list of helpless and pitiful communities disappearing from the planet. It's not surprising that young Jews are opting out of Judaism. Who wants to be a victim?

We have to stop defining ourselves by the way others perceive us. Assimilation is when non-Jews love us so much they want to marry us. Anti-Semitism is when non-Jews hate us so much they want to kill us. When both these realities are happening within our communities, how are we to think of ourselves?

We need a clear and positive reason to stay Jewish. Failing that, why should Judaism survive? Is there a good argument for not assimilating into the welcoming societies surrounding us? Is there a compelling reason to stay proudly Jewish in the face of anti-Semitism?

I think there is.

Judaism is the most powerful idea that the world has ever seen. Jews should survive because we have a message that the world needs to hear.

The Jewish way of life is a revolutionary force that can transform ordinary lives into lives of meaning. A family that keeps the Shabbat is always reminded of what is really important - that there is more to life than accumulating wealth. The Kosher laws teach us that we are not mere animals that must feed our every urge and desire, and that eating itself can be holy. A Mezuzah on the door tells the world that this home is built for a higher purpose.

Judaism teaches lessons that the world urgently needs to learn

- that every individual person is created in the image of G-d, and is therefore unique and valuable, that morality is not relative but absolute and that humans are partners with G-d in creation, with a mission to create heaven on earth.

These bold Jewish ideas are more relevant now than ever. But bold Jewish ideas need bold people to perpetuate them. The world can only be elevated if individuals first elevate themselves. We can only make

the world into a divine home if we start with our own homes. This is Judaism's formula to change the world for better. This is why Jews must stay Jewish.

The biggest threat to Judaism is not external pressure but rather internal confusion. When we lose sight of our mission, we lose the strength and stamina to survive. The Jewish feeling we need to develop in ourselves and our children is not fear of anti-Semitism, or guilt about assimilation. It is a humble pride in the greatness of the Jewish mission and confident resolve to fulfill it. When we are clear about our identity, no threat in the world can shake us. \(\triangle \)

L'chaim!

Rabbi Yisroel giving one of the

many conferences offered at

Chabad NDG

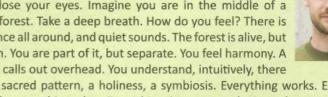
Rabbi Yisroel Bernath Chabad NDG & Loyola Campus

Cover Photo

This photo was taking during the IAP's Friday Fun Day, "Play in the Dirt". We did just that: we played with and in the dirt, planted bean seeds, which were then given to the Sustainable Concordia Garden Project. At the same time, we explored what our faiths and spiritual paths say about creation and the earth. With this photo and through the articles and reflections in this issue of sources, we invite you to explore that same theme: Sustainable Spirituality and Spiritual Sustainability. Enjoy!

Close Your Eyes...

lose your eyes. Imagine you are in the middle of a forest. Take a deep breath. How do you feel? There is silence all around, and quiet sounds. The forest is alive, but calm. You are part of it, but separate. You feel harmony. A bird calls out overhead. You understand, intuitively, there



is a sacred pattern, a holiness, a symbiosis. Everything works. Everything feeds everything else. Everything is connected. You take another deep breath. A soothing peace washes over you, in you, through you. You feel open. In that silence, you begin to feel a little more you, somehow. It seems easier without all the noise of the city. Everything that ever seemed wrong or bad seems less so. You feel a little stronger, a little more forgiven, a little less angry. You feel like you can maybe get some answers to those questions that have been holding out on you; that you never quite get around to: why am I alive? Why did I have that argument? Who haven't I been in touch



continued on page 5 - See "Close"



Ellie's Notes...

Sustainability. How would you describe it? My guess is that if I asked 10 people to define sustainability, I would get 15 answers. There are so many different opinions, viewpoints, priorities, and

perspectives on sustainability that it is difficult to pin down. I have some sense of what it is: it is more than following the 100-mile diet, more than designing LEED-certified buildings, more than a new business ethic, more than using public transit rather than a car. For me, it has something to do with living in a way that allows generations after me to enjoy the earth, and being partners in creation. It is also about our physical and mental well-being. It is about creating institutions, relationships and even schedules that allow us to maintain a way of life that nurtures us. It is about being in touch with our spirituality.

Ah, another big word: Spirituality! Again, if I asked 10 people to speak about what spirituality means to them, I would get 15 answers, depending on their religious or philosophical path, depending on their life experience, the questions that guide their daily living, and many other things. Spirituality is more than prayer or meditation, more than the belief in God or the adherence to a system of beliefs, and more than just a personal way of life to find balance and wholeness. I would describe it as that which points beyond the human experience, that which nurtures, strengthens and challenges us to live in a way that promotes justice, peace, and wholeness for all.

It is interesting that both spirituality and sustainability are hard to define, and yet they are two often-discussed topics. Go into any bookstore and you find shelves and shelves of books. Google the terms, and you will find over 35,000,000 entries for each. And now, we are even connecting the terms and talking about "sustainable spirituality" or "spiritual sustainability". And just what does that mean?

One of the things it means to me is that both spirituality and sustainability, whether on their own or connected, point to a great hunger: a hunger for meaning, for purpose, for new ways of approaching new problems, new ways of looking at life. Both sustainability and spirituality touch the soul of this generation and invite it to dig deep and dream new dreams.

And this gives me great hope. For it seems that we are willing, once again, to push our comfort zones, to ask difficult questions, and to engage in creative inquiry about our lives and our world. It gives me hope that many of us are willing not just to consider the "I", but also the "we". It gives me hope that maybe, just maybe, we will find a way to sustain the earth and all creation, to find ways of living that do not kill us and others around us. It gives me hope that we are willing to see all humans as one community. \triangle

Ellie Hummel Chaplain

Building a Sustainable Interfaith Community

ILDING

This past April, five members of the *Interfaith Ambassador Program* (IAP) and two staff from Multi-faith Chaplaincy piled into a van and drove to Rochester, NY, to attend the *Understanding Interfaith Conference* (https://interfaith2010.naz.edu/). It was an amazing experience in many ways. Recently, *sources* caught up

with the students and asked them about what they felt they learned and their hopes for the IAP at

Concordia University in the coming year.

Unai: Initiated by chantings of "peace, salam, shalom, namaste", the Interfaith Understanding Conference was a great opportunity for me to learn how others see the world. Specifically, how the world is seen through the many eyes of faith. I've always had the feeling that, just as the Enlightenment viewed a religious age as inferior,

our society has the belief that science will ultimately solve all of humanity's problems. In this view, the underestimated power of faith is often disregarded. Overcoming barriers of both rigidity and fundamentalism in religion and in the sciences, we worked at creating a dialogue between faiths in a search for the common principles needed to build a better world.

Michael: The conference greatly shaped my view of interfaith and increased my awareness of the necessity for interfaith dialogue

and cooperation in our developing global society. With each successive speaker, activity, or conversation, my view of interfaith continued to become more nuanced, complex, and integrated. I observed that we each approach questions of faith from a certain perspective. I believe that the gift of interfaith understanding is

that it encourages us to approach our fellow human beings, who have a perspective different than ours, with respect, openness, and curiosity.

In doing so, we are free to accept each other simply as human beings while at the same time acknowledging the diversity and uniqueness of each. I came away from the conference with a strong sense that interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and understanding are increasingly more important in our present context.

Mariel: Similar to Michael's experience, the conference played a great part in allowing me to shape my views of the entire interfaith phenomenon. As someone who believes wholeheartedly in the importance and impact of religious plurality and tolerance, the concept of both a multi-faith and an interfaith approach to understanding religion, belief, and spirituality, as demonstrated at the *Understanding Interfaith Conference*, was invaluable. Seeing this coming-together of different people with different stories, with one central goal, was inspiring. Perhaps one of the most valuable

aspects for me, on a personal level, was the demonstration that in order for interfaith to have the most impact, people of all kinds, from devout believers, ritual experts, secular humanists, and

seekers, must come together, and each is as valuable as the next. It has helped me shape my own understanding of what place and role I can have within the interfaith world, and it has provided me with the guidance and confidence to give it my all.

Claire: I was struck the number of people, young and old, from all over the United States, who have been engaged in interfaith work for many years. It feels like the interfaith movement in Canada is still in

powerful.



Rev. Ellie Hummel with Dr. Eboo Patel, Founder & Executive Director of the *Interfaith Youth Core*

its infancy, while in the US there already exists a strong network of organizations and individuals working to promote interfaith ideas and practices. I spoke to many people who were thrilled to have Canadian representation at the conference and who were eager to maintain a strong relationship with the IAP. Experiencing the interfaith movement in the US context was inspiring and provided me with a vision for how I would like to see this movement grow in Canada.

The plenary speakers also had a huge impact. It was inspiring to hear the speakers (representative of five major world religions) discuss how their own faiths inform their work in the interfaith movement. From a Rabbi who spoke of the dangers of extremism by recounting a hilarious, yet poignant story, about his encounter with a Jesus-loving taxi driver, to a Zen Buddhist monk who spoke simply, but passionately, about religion's place in our current environmental crisis and her own efforts to promote awareness about water shortage, I began to see more clearly how issues of religion and faith permeate our (so-called secular) everyday lives. Perhaps most importantly, however, the plenary speakers represented individuals who were both deeply committed to their own religious tradition and the interfaith movement. They drew insight from their own particular faiths in order to inspire and inform their interfaith work, and it seems to me that their ability to commit deeply to these dual perspectives is what makes the interfaith movement so diverse and

Joseph-Alexandre:

gathering of these hundreds of participants motivated me to acknowledge that, regardless of our differences, we share much more in common with each other than we even like to admit: air, water, the land we walk on, resources, etc. I think that the most important aspect of the conference, for me, was coming to realize that there are many people willing to work together despite our differences, because we can recognize that there is a common goal (or goals), that needs to be met, for the growth and development of each person, and for our society as a whole.

Having seen the IAP grow and transform since its conception, I am excited to see the discussions of faith on campus to grow in number as well as momentum. I believe that spiritual dialogue can lead to greater understanding among the members of the student body. In fact, what I am advocating is that it is time for our students to come out of the religious closet. We have many religious groups at Concordia, which make our campus one of the most diverse religiously, culturally, and ethnically. It is the IAP's mandate this year, and hopefully for many to come, to encourage students of faith to come together and work towards common goals, rather than remain in isolated groups.

The conversations pertaining to sexuality, gender, politics, and sustainability are important to our students, and we have many students fighting for what they believe in. These beliefs come from values that many of us share, but whether they are religious or otherwise, I maintain that they need to be included in our dialogues, debates and conversations. Faith makes us who we are, and interfaith entails that we acknowledge that our differences are what make us so capable of changing our world, together.

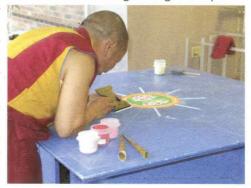
Mariel: Yes, and I truly believe that the conference provided the



IAP team with a vision of how we can bring questions of faith to campus. It has empowered me to really explore the ways in which we can find a place for every type of person within interfaith discourse, and how we can use the dynamic for social good, through awareness, dialogue, and service.

Unai: One of the ideas that stuck in my mind for quite a while after the conference was that "nobody knows everything about anything". By accepting this statement we realize about the importance of dialogue for the construction of knowledge, life's improvement and conflict resolution. Through dialogue we opened

our hearts to other perspectives. We enriched our own vision and reaffirmed our initial assumption on the importance of keeping faith a current topic to be shared among people of all





backgrounds. We acknowledged the power of believing in something, and the potential of channelling this energy into relevant social causes.

Michael: Since the conference, we, the IAP leadership team, have been in a process of visioning new possibilities for next year, informed by the many activities and events from the conference, as well as our inaugural year. We begin the coming year with greater bonds of

friendship and increased capacity for teamwork and expansion. A road trip to a conference can have that effect! Finally, the IAP is better informed about interfaith initiatives around the world and I believe better able to uniquely contribute a program that will speak to Concordia students. \triangle



Back row (from left to right): Joseph Darrous, Mariel Bazinet, Chris Koudelka (from Nazareth College), Michael Abravanel, Unai Miquelajauregui

Front row: Laura Gallo, Claire Barnes

"Close Your Eyes" continued from page 2

with recently? What do I love? What makes me happy? What are the hidden talents I have yet to discover?

Sustainability is the attempt to reconcile the world with our human practices, to bring us back into harmony with nature, with each other. It is a challenge to what has become the conventional way of thinking: a reductionist, rationalist approach to the experience of being human that has built our industrial society and has systematically destabilized and weakened the harmony of ecosystems that gave rise to life on Earth.

What is sustainability? At its most basic level, it means the capacity to endure. How can the world, or any being for that matter, endure without spirit? Spirit is the life-force, the essence of being. The strength of the spirit is directly connected to the quality of one's experience. Spirit is revealed in a smile, in the eyes. Many of the features of our industrial world directly or indirectly weaken spirit through negative practices that harm life, that disregard the sacred balance.

I feel that at an intrinsic level we know and recognize what is wrong and right, and we know that it is possible to live sustainably. Who can argue that a landfill leaching poisonous waste into the water system is acceptable or justifiable anymore? The carbon dioxide seeping out of our cars and smokestacks is warming the atmosphere and may make the Earth uninhabitable – already indigenous peoples closer to the land see the change and suffer for it.

The greatest crime is that it is unnecessary. It is driven only by greed, by an unwillingness to shake off the vices that provide such short term pleasure. It can be corrected by walking the Buddhist's Eight-fold path; or heeding the words of Matthew 16:26, when Jesus said "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"

Is sustainability, then, salvation? One need have only spent some time watching the oil gush out of the Gulf seabed this summer to realize that things can quickly spiral out of control, and that the profit motive has lead to dangerous carelessness on the part of people in positions of power. Sustainability, to me, means maturity. It's been said we have an adolescent society, demanding immediate satisfaction of short-term desires. It's time to weigh our choices carefully.

The Earth Charter says it best: "We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future... We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more... Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature."

Ultimately, for me, sustainability is about bringing our world closer to nature, making our cities more liveable, more tranquil, more healthy, happy and calm — more like forests and less like factories. We will all need to make tough choices and 'grow up' a little about our wants and needs, and make some sacrifices. But out of sacrifice comes appreciation and gratitude, and ultimately, I believe, the good life. And it can be fun!

I am excited about the growing movement for sustainability that is manifesting here at Concordia and in the broader world of which we are part, and the accompanied deepening of spirituality that I see along with it. I believe Sustainable Concordia's relocation to share Annex Z on Mackay Street with Concordia's Multi-faith Chaplaincy is a meaningful opportunity to bring spirit into sustainability, and vice versa. I am also inspired by the emerging development of the Loyola Chapel into a multifaith centre for spiritual and personal development. I believe all will benefit from a greater presence of the sacred in their lives, and I look forward to sharing that journey with everyone in our wonderful community. Please visit us at Sustainable Concordia anytime and good luck in the year to come! \Diamond

Cameron Stiff Sustainable Concordia

Getting on Board Student

Life, Routine, and Challenges at Concordía

September 3, 2009, I was with our Interfaith Facilitator at the table mounted on the

second floor of the Hall Building to explain the role of the Dean of Students and Multi-faith chaplaincy programs to new students. As the students approached the table, they seemed divided between playing the tough self-confident person and showing the vulnerability of a newcomer. In the former case, they decided not to ask any questions. For these students, the philosophy was clear: Even if you need help to locate your classrooms, the CSU office, or the International Students Office, just pretend you know where you are going. For example, they decided to avoid asking what the Dean of Students' table is meant to offer, and just keep on moving. In the end, most of these students ascended and descended the escalator leading to the fourth floor at least four times!

Other students were ready to be initiated into their new environment through the medium of asking questions or seeking directions. To them, the philosophy of Socrates applies: "The unexamined life is not worth living." In this light, the unexamined environment is not worth living in. So they question, examine and, explore their new environment by asking: "Where is this lecture hall located? Where is the office for student's ID? Where is the Financial Aid Office?" In fact, only one out of twenty-five students asked: "What is this table all about?" No one even asked, if the campuses have a place for quiet, calm, self-emptying, self-discovery and soul discovery exercises. This is how it is. Sometimes, we feel like chatting with someone. Other times, we prefer to keep to ourselves, entirely, to observe the events around us.

These cases are the realities I experienced during my debut at Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy. On several occasions, during the Mother Hubbard's program, clusters of students shared their thoughts and "beliefs" with each other. Often, you can hear one student saying, "My brother is a saint, but I'm the 'black sheep' in my family." Or, you will hear a student sighing: "Ooh, I was so busy this week with work that I could not complete my assignments." Work, assignments, and "hanging out" are the major concerns of students. Whether you notice it or not, it boils down to one social or spiritual reality: your relationship with parents, siblings, friends, strangers, or books. No doubt, your daily stories and anecdotes depend on whether you have had an amazing rapport with those you interact with, or not.

The challenges of my presence in Multi-faith spaces are two-fold. Maybe you feel the same. How do I connect with students in the reality of their routine life and hopes? How do I provide the social space for students to validate their experiences by allowing them to narrate their stories, to celebrate their joys, and to evaluate their concerns? One thing is sure, self-emptying, self-discovery, and soul discovery occur even within the routine life of students. These are our spiritual life and qualities. To meet

friends or gather with fellow students and to share these activities is really awesome. Definitely, you can bring so much reassurance, confidence, and meaning to others just by sharing with, listening to, and interacting with them in a social space, transformed as it were into uplifting and elevating space. This way, you are not alone in a routine student life. Far from it, you are sustained by those around you, even if they seem not to notice. This is why St. Augustine says in poetic words: "I believe, in order to understand; I understand, the better to believe."

Fr. Paul Anyidoho, Roman Catholic Chaplain

Mother Hubbard's back again!



On September 23, 2010, Mother Hubbard returns to her kitchen.

Every Thursday evening until December 9, 2010 she

will be cooking up her delicious and nutritious vegan meals in Annex Z from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.

All we ask for is a donation of \$2 to help pay expenses!

So, come on in, and bring your friends Everyone is welcome!

Would you like to volunteer to help out at Mother Hubbard's?

We can always use help both in preparation and during the meal itself. If you would like to be involved in this really great program contact our Mo' Hubb's coordinator at:

mohubbs@alcor.concordia.ca

Пеш!!!!

As mentioned in various places throughout this issue, an expanded edition of sources is now going to be on the web.

Check out the Multi-faith Chaplaincy web page for the link to the web edition for additional articles and detailed program information.

http://chaplaincy.concordia.ca

The Interfaith Ambassador Program

Sacred Dialogues

An opportunity to share our personal experiences and thoughts on spirituality.

Faith in Action

Participate in a community project and explore faith and spiritual paths while doing so.

Sacred Sites

Join us as we visit sacred sites in Montreal and explore spirituality through them.

Interfaith Retreat

October 1-3, 2010 (Advance registration required.)

Want to find out more:

Contact...

Laura Gallo (Igallo@alcor.concordia.ca)

e-mail: interfaith.concordia@gmail.com

or visit: chaplaincy.concordia.ca/interfaith-ambassador-program

Are you a Student Group of a Spiritual or Religious Nature?

Several Concordia Student Groups of a religious nature offer programs in Multi-faith Chaplaincy spaces such as:

- 4 Chabad of NDG & Loyola Campus
- Concordia Association of Baha'i Studies
- Concordia Christian Fellowship
- Interfaith Ambassador Program
- Roman Catholic Student Association
- SGI Buddhist Club
- The Art of Living Club (Yoga)
- 1 Thagalayn Muslim Association

For up-to-date days, times and locations of their programs click on the *Programs & Groups* on our web page at:

http://www.chaplaincy.concordia.ca

or check out our new on-line edition of sources, which will be available from our web page shortly.

Other groups whose information you may also find there are:

- 1 The Muslim Student Association
- Campus for Christ

If you are a Concordia student or group who would like to pursue a spiritual path, Multi-faith Chaplaincy might be able to assist you or your group. Contact us at the coordinates on the back page for more information.

What's new at the Loyola Chapel?

There is an exciting initiative happening in the heart of Concordia's Loyola Campus. An innovative gathering



It is sacred space.

place is emerging in the Loyola Chapel to meet the diverse needs of Concordia's multicultural community.

We provide an inclusive and multi-purpose space for personal development, social engagement, arts, music, wellness programs, spiritual

practice, inter-faith dialogue, prayer, meditation, yoga, reflection...

For more details, and to find out how you can get involved, come check out the beautiful space and meet the awesome staff.

To contact us:

Helen Downie, Administrator, ext. 3588, Email: chapel@alcor.concordia.ca

Solomon Krueger, Development Officer, ext. 3589, Email: skrueger@alcor.concordia.ca

sources..

a publication of Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 2010

Editor: Rev. Ellie Hummel Published at Montreal, QC http://chaplaincy.concordia.ca/ Banner Design: Bernard Paul Glover Cover Photo: Tracey Fisher No reproduction without permission

Our Multi-faith Chaplaincy Team

OurIn-house Team

Rev. Ellie Hummel

Chaplain and Coordinator Phone Ext: 3590 Ellie.Hummel@concordia.ca

Fr. Paul Anyidoho Roman Catholic Chaplain Phone Ext: 3586 panyidoh@alcor.concordia.ca

Laura Gallo Interfaith Facilitator Phone: Ext: 3591 Igallo@alcor.concordia.ca

Tracey Fisher
Service Assistant
SGW Office: Z 102
Phone Ext: 3593
Tracey Fisher@concordia.ca

Bernard Glover

Departmental Assistant SGW Office: Z 205 Phone Ext: 3585

Bernard.Glover@concordia.ca





Not in this picture: Fr. Paul Anyidoho and Rev. Diane Rollert

Why not drop in?

You will always find a warm welcome at Multi-faith Chaplaincy!

SGW: Annex Z (2090 Mackay, across from the Hall bldg.)

Loyola: administration building L-AD 130

If you would like to call ahead...

...dial 514- 848-2424

and enter the desired extension at the prompt.

Our Associate Chaplains

Baha'i Ilona Weinstein 514- 485-9543 ilonaweinstein@sympatico.ca

Hindu

Dr. T.S. Rukmani rukmani@alcor.concordia.ca

Jewish

Rabbi Yisroel Bernath (514) 686-6770 rabbi@jewishmonkland.com

Muslim

Imam Salam Elmenyawi 514-748-8427 salam@succedent.com

Sikh

Mr. Manjit Singh lo.man@sympatico.ca

Zen Buddhist

Myōkyō Judith McLean 514-842-3648 info@enpuku-ji.org

Unitarian

Rev. Diane Rollert 514-485-7654 DianeRollert@ucmtl.ca

In collaboration with the Centre for Native Education:

Native Elder

Morning Star at Ext: 7327

Programs Offered by Multi-faith Chaplaincy

Drum Circles with Laura Gallo

SGW: Tuesdays from 1:00-2:00 PM in Z-05

Loyola: Thursdays from Noon to 1:00 PM in the Loyola Chapel

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Thursdays from 5:00-7:00 PM, Z-105/06, September 23 to December 9, 2010.

Interfaith Ambassador Program

Retreat, October 1-3, 2010 (Advance registration required)
For full IAP information see our web site:
http://chaplaincy.concordia.ca/interfaith-ambassador-program/

Prayer, Spirituality and Eucharist

Thursdays from noon to 1:00 PM in the Loyola Chapel.

Weekly meeting - Catholic Students Association Wednesdays from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM, Z-05.



Programs Offered by Associate Chaplains

Pizza & Parsha with Rabbi Yisroel

Zen Meditation with Myōkyō

Insight (Vipassana) Meditation with Daryl Ross

Baha'i Devotional Discussions with Ilona Weinstein

For more information about days, times, and locations of all of our programs offered by and through Multifaith Chaplaincy check out our soon-to-be-released on-line edition of sources. You will find the link to it on our web site: http://chaplaincy.concordia.ca